

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 remain pending in the present application. Claim 7 has been cancelled. Claims 1, 5, 8, 10 and 11 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yasunobu Iwata (U.S. Pat. No. 5,485,366) and referred to Iwata hereinafter.

Claims 1, 8, 10 and 11 have been amended to define the data preparation/input unit as comprising a system control setting menu that is configured with a table having a column of operation data items and condition data items and a row of operation step items. Operation data instructing operations and condition data for causing said operations in accordance with a predetermined sequence are prepared by setting the operation and condition data at each operation step in the system control setting menu.

Thus, even a machinery designer with no control knowledge can easily prepare a system control design by just realizing desired operation steps in the system control setting menu. Further, operation routines can be easily set by only selecting operation items and condition items in the system control setting menu. Therefore, a change in operation after installation of a system can be made by recovering the system control setting menu without having to change the control ladder diagram.

On the other hand, Iwata does not disclose the system control setting menu. Iwata discloses that operation routines are prepared by using a process sequence

operation table 31, 31A storing executed store numbers A1, transition condition numbers A2 and next executed step numbers A3. Therefore, when operation routines are prepared, the step numbers and the transition condition numbers have to be respectively checked by using a step operation program table 33 and a transition condition program table 34. This results in the change of operation routines in a PLC being complicated.

Thus, Applicants believe independent Claims 1, 8, 10 and 11, as amended, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 2-6 and 9, which ultimately depend from one of these independent claims, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Claim 7 has been cancelled. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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